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Newfoundland
Labrador

March 19, 1998
(Justice)

Consumer advocate re-appointed for upcoming PUB hearings.

Minister of Justice and Attorney General Chris Decker has re-appointed a consumer advocate to look at Newfoundland Power's rate of return. Dennis Browne will again represent the consumer at Public Utilities Board hearings which will soon be held. The hearings are further to the board's investigation of the utility's rate of return given the decline in the long-term Canada Bond rate.

"It is important that the consumer advocate is able to follow through on this issue on behalf of the people of the province. Government is pleased that Dennis Browne will participate at the PUB hearings to ensure the interests of the consumer are protected," said the minister.

The hearings will focus on the appropriateness of an automatic rate of return adjustment based on the fluctuation in the financial markets such as bond rates.

Mr. Browne was appointed in 1996 as consumer advocate when Newfoundland Power applied to the Public Utilities Board for a rate increase. More recently, Mr. Browne conducted a study on gas prices in the province on behalf of the consumers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Dennis Browne, a senior partner with French Browne, is a member of the Panel of Arbitrators as approved by the Newfoundland Labour Management Co-operation Committee, and is an arbitrator and adjudicator under The Canada Labour Code. He was chairperson of the province's Labour Relations Board from 1989 until February of 1998.

Browne will attend a pre-hearing which will commence on April 2, 1998.

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